in the region to-some extent contributed to the slow progress of work.

(c) The progress of construction of new terminal complex and that of runway works at Lilabari is 17% and 32% respectively as on 30.4.98. These works are likely to be completed by July, 99.

Development of Civil Aviation in North-Eastern Region

606. SHRI PARAG CHALIHA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of steps, if any, taken/ contemplated by Government for a rapid development of civil aviation in the States of the North-Eastern region;

(b) whether any Action Plan has been prepared by Government, therefore;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) to (d) With a view to achieving better regulation of air transport seivices and taking into account the need for air transport services of different regions in the country, the Government has laid down the Route Dispersal Guidelines. Accordingly, every operator operating any scheduled air transport services within the country is required to provide at least 10% of the capacity deployed on trunk routes (Category—1) to stations connecting the North-East region, J & K, Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep (Category-H). A proposal to provide incentives to further develop air services to North Eastern region is also under consideration, which envisages providing subsidy and other incentives to the operators for operating services in this region. Development/upgradatioi. of airports at Agartala, Guwahati, Imphal, North Lakhimpur, Silchar, and Tezpur is in progress.

Post Offices and Telegraph Offices in Gujarat

607. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of post offices and telegraph offices under the Gujarat (Ahmedabad) circle modernised during 1994-95 and 1996, till now;

(b) the expenditure incurred thereon;

(c) the criteria fixed for the selection of contractors;

(d) whether criteria has been followed strictly while awarding contracts; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefore and the action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) In 1994-95, 7 Post Offices, 24 Telegraph Offices and 33 Combined offices were modernised. From the year 1995-96, till now 90 post offices, 6 telegraph offices and 30 combined offices have been modernised.

(b) An expenditure of about Rs. 4.46 crores has been incurred thereon.

(c) The selection of contractors was done through the "Open Tender" System.

(d) yes, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

Talks on Demands of Private Basic Operators

608.SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government recently held talks with the private basic operators and as a result thereof DOT (Department of Telecommunications, has agreed for certain concessions in order to give impetus to the slow progress of the